Carbon Dating

Theme

Ever since that whole asteroid business last week, the dating pool has been really strained for the dinosaurs. As a savvy entrepreneur, you see this as an opportunity! Your new matchmaking start-up promises to give the surviving dinosaurs one last chance at love.

Overview

In Carbon Dating, you'll spend a number of rounds seating dinosaurs at a large table. Dinosaurs will talk with their neighbours, and based on their compatibility might have a good or bad date. Dinosaurs who have a good date will leave satisfied, giving good reviews of your business! Bad dates will have an effect specific to the dinosaur: many dinosaurs will get annoyed by a bad date and leave the table, but others might stampede or even eat their fellow dinosaurs! Managing the chaos caused by bad dates is the key to maintaining the reputation of your business – you might be able to take advantage of these effects to set up better dates, and if it comes down to it, eaten dinosaurs can't give bad reviews...

Card Layout

1 & 2: Compatibility Arrow and Hearts
Used to determine if two dinosaurs will have a good/bad date
**3: Dinosaur Ability**
The dinosaur's unique special effect(s). The symbol shows how/when to resolve the effect:

⚡ : The effect triggers when this dinosaur has a bad date

❗ : The effect triggers immediately when this dinosaur is played to the table

🛋 : The effect is constantly active while this dinosaur is seated at the table

⭐ : This dinosaur is played in a special way rather than to the table following the normal rules
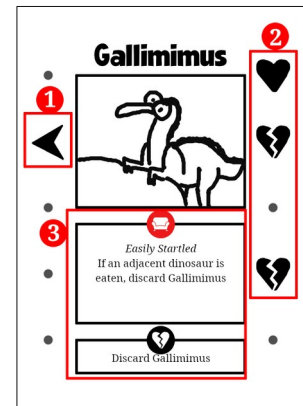
Setup

1. Set aside the Pterodactyl and Tyrannosaurus cards.

2. Shuffle the remaining cards together to form the deck

3. Draw four cards and set them face up in a row below the deck to form the table. **Do not resolve any special effects or dates at this point.**

4. Leave a space to the left of the deck for discarded dinosaurs, and a space to the right of the deck for satisfied dinosaurs.
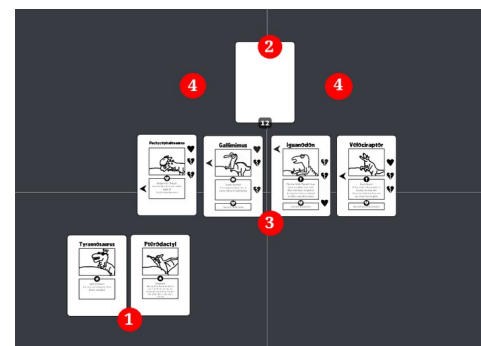
Completed Setup

Gameplay

Each round, draw two cards from the deck then play them one at a time – **make sure to fully resolve the effects of playing a card before playing another**. One of these cards must be played to the left side of the table, the other must be played to the right side of the table.

To play a card:

> *Tip:*
> Remember to keep an eye out for ⚠️ and 🪑 effects and take them into account when playing cards!

1. Place the card to extend the table in the chosen direction
2. Fully resolve any ⚠️ immediate effects of the played card
3. Resolve the date between the played card and its neighbour

Steps 2 and 3 may result in a chain of effects by creating new dates as cards are moved around/removed from the table. **Fully resolve these effects before moving to the next step or playing any more cards.**

The Pterodactyl and Tyrannosaurus cards may be played during any round in addition to the cards you draw. They follow special rules rather than being played as normal.

Key Concepts

The Table

The row of dinosaur cards below the deck forms the table. **Whenever cards are removed from the table, shift the remaining cards together to fill any gaps left in the table** – this will usually cause a new date to be resolved as the dinosaurs surrounding the gap are brought together and seated next to each other.

Resolving Dates

Throughout the game as cards are played, removed from the table, or moved around the table, they might end up next to a new neighbour. Whenever this happens, resolve a date between the card and it's new neighbour:

- If the compatibility arrow of the right-hand card is pointing to a full heart on the left-hand card, the dinosaurs have a good date. **Both dinosaurs leave satisfied** – remove them from the table and place them to the right of the deck.

- If the compatibility arrow instead points to a broken heart, **resolve only the 💔 bad date effect on the left-hand card** (the one with the broken heart). For many cards this effect is to discard the dinosaur, but other cards have a unique effect that gets resolved instead.

- If the compatibility arrow doesn't point at at either kind of heart, they have a medium date and nothing happens.

Sometimes a card might end up next to two new neighbours (eg: due to the Pterodactyl's ability). In this case, choose either of the new neighbours, and only resolve a date with that neighbour.

Eating and Discarding

To discard a dinosaur, add it to the discard pile to the left of the deck. If the deck runs out of cards, you will shuffle the discard pile to form the new deck.

To eat a dinosaur, tuck the eaten dinosaur card underneath the eating dinosaur. Eaten dinosaur cards stay tucked and move around the table with the dinosaur that ate them. If a dinosaur has a good date, any dinosaurs it has eaten come with it to the satisfied dinosaurs area, and if it is discarded, the dinosaurs it has eaten go with it to the discard pile (in this case, they no longer count as eaten, just separate cards in the discard pile). All cards that have been eaten by a dinosaur are eaten with it when that dinosaur is eaten.

Game End

If the deck is empty and you need to draw a card, shuffle the discard pile to form the new deck. If both the deck and discard pile are empty and you need to draw a card, the game ends after you complete the rest of the round by playing any remaining cards you were able to draw.

After the final round, all dinosaurs **at the table** (excluding eaten dinosaurs) and **in the discard pile** give your business a bad review. Count these bad reviews to determine your rating!

0: Flawless Matchmaker

1-2: Love Maestro

3-4: Matchmaking Guru

5+: Extinction Accelerator

> *Tip:*
> Discarding isn't always a bad thing: it might let you set up better dates and the discarded dinosaurs will return later!

Extra Challenges

Apply one or more of these variant rules/goals for a bit of extra challenge!

*Impatient Customers:* The discard pile may only be shuffled into the deck one time.

Staffing Shortage: Shuffle the Pterodactyl and Tyrannosaurus into the deck after completing setup. They must be played the turn they are drawn

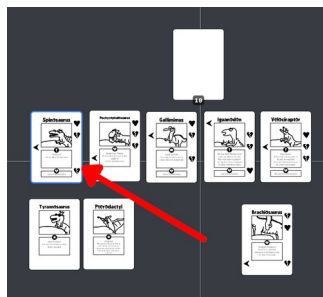*Health and Safety Audit:* End the game with 3 or fewer dinosaurs eaten

VIP - Very Important Predator: End the game with one dinosaur having eaten 5 or more other dinosaurs

Blind Dates: When drawing cards for your turn, keep one face down. Reveal it after playing it, then resolve it as normal
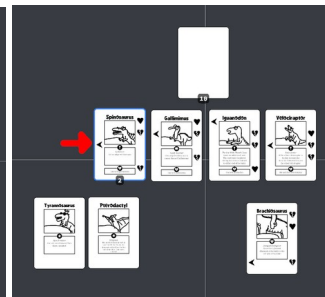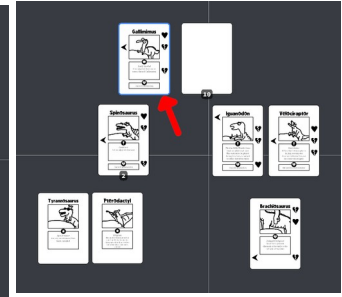
Example Round
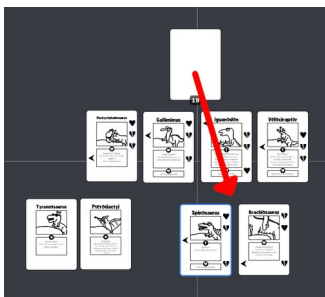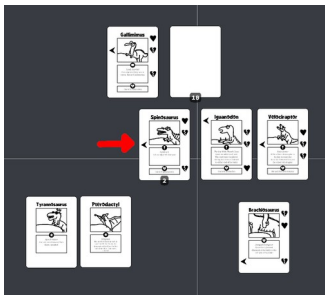

1. Draw cards: Spinosaurus and Brachiosaurus

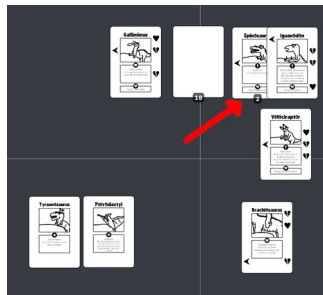*2. Play Spinosaurus to the left of the table*
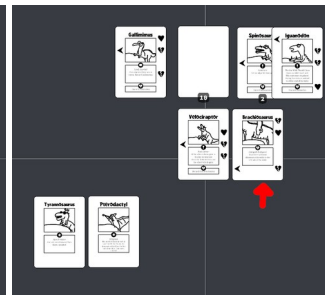
3. Spinosaurus eats its neighbour using its 🟢 ability

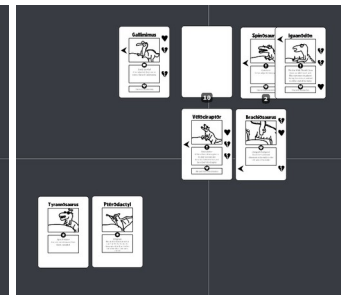*4. Gallimimus is discarded due to its 🔴 ability*

5. Spinosaurus shifts to fill the gap in the table

6. Spinosaurus and Iguanadon have a good date

7. Play Brachiosaurus to the right side of the table

8. Brachiosaurus has a medium date with Velociraptor: no effect